

British FREE-HOLDER'S

POLITICAL CATECHISM:

Addressed and Recommended to the

8145 C.
3

FREE CITIZENS,

AND

K Lucas

FREE-HOLDERS,

OF THE

CITY of DUBLIN,

At this Critical Conjunction.



DUBLIN:

Printed for JAMES KELBURN in
George's-Lane, 1748.

[Price, one Penny.]

44.
7 19
801.



D. V. B. 1. W.

Printed for J. and S. Taylor, Stationers, Strand.

Geographical Society.

[Printed for J. and S. Taylor, Stationers, Strand.]

P R E F A C E.

IT is one of the indispensable Duties of every Member of a Free State, to be watchful of the Rights and Liberties of the Community; which, under the best and most perfect Government, are constantly exposed to sundry Dangers and Vicissitudes.

No Man can be said to be born for himself alone. The highest, the first of Men is a Servant to the Public.---Our first Duty is to God, the next is to our *Neighbour*; and all the Sons of *Adam* are our Neighbours, even, our Brethren.

Liberty is alike the Birth-Right of all Men. And no Man, or Body of Men are deprived of that Blessing, but thro' some unjust, unlawful Means.

No Man is intitled to an Arbitrary Sway over another. Nor could any Man assume such a Power, over a Multitude, were not the Multitude first made or become, by some means or other, passive Vassals, or Slaves.

Among the various means whereby wicked Men have effected the enslaving of Nations, the keeping them in Ignorance has always proved the most effectual. It is not to be supposed, while Men know their natural Power, their invaluable Rights and Privileges, that they can be such Brutes as to give them up, tamely, to be exercised absolutely and arbitrarily by any Body.

The Intent of reprinting the annexed *Catechism*, taken from the justly admired Writings of a true Patriot of a neighbouring Country, is to excite, upon this critical Occasion, a just Sense and Spirit of Liberty in the Electors of the City of *Dublin*, who have never been known to fail in asserting their Rights and Liberties, when they were duly known. I shall therefore without further Preface or Apology, republish, in this convenient form, this excellent Summary of the Duty and Rights of a Free-holder and Free-man, and beg leave to recommend it to the serious and careful perusal of all Lovers of Truth and Liberty.

To this I shall also beg leave to prefix a sketch of the Properties or Qualifications necessary for a Member of Parliament, as they are laid down in Lord chief Justice *Coke's* Institutes.

“ Every Member of the HOUSE of COMMONS, being
a Coun-

P R E F A C E.

a Counsellor, should have three Properties of the *Elephant* : First, that he hath no Gall : Secondly, that he is inflexible and cannot Bow : Thirdly, that he is of a most ripe and perfect Memory : Which Properties ought to be in every Member of the great Council of Parliament. First, to be without Gall, that is, without Malice, Rancor, Heat and Envy ; every Gallish Inclination, (if any were) should tend to the good of the whole Body, the Common-Wealth. Secondly, that he be constant, inflexible, and not to be bowed, or turned from the Right, either for Fear, Reward, or Favor ; nor in Judgment respect any Person. Thirdly, of a ripe Memory, that they, remembering Perils past, might prevent Dangers to come”.

These are the Properties of a Member of Parliament, as taken by this great Lawyer from a Parliament Roll of the third of *Henry* the sixth ; to which our Author adds two more Properties of the *Elephant*, as absolutely necessary for a Member of Parliament. The one, that though the *Elephant* be an Animal of the greatest Strength and Understanding, he is yet a *gregarious* Animal : For *Elephants* are sociable, and live and go together in Companies. And sociable Creatures that go in Flocks or Herds are not hurtful, as Deer, Sheep, &c. But Beasts that walk solely, or Singularly, as Bears, Foxes, &c. are dangerous and hurtfull. The other, that the *Elephant* is a Friend and Lover of Man. For it is said of the *Elephant*, that he always endeavours to set a straying Man aright.

These few short Hints, which are all the hurry of Business and attendance upon the Corporations in their public Halls, would permit me to offer for some time passed, I thought necessary to lay before you. Be assured I shall, as opportunity offers, fulfill all my Engagements to you, particularly in laying these matters more fully before you ; as I am, with the utmost Zeal for your Liberties, and sincere Affection for your Persons,

Your most faithfull, and

Dublin October *invariable Friend, and Servant,*

7th 1748.

C. L U C A S.

T H E

British FREE-HOLDER'S

POLITICAL CATECHISM.

QUESTION.

W H O are You ?

A. I am T. M. a Free-holder of *Great-Britain*.

Q. What Privilege enjoyest thou by being a Free-holder of *Great-Britain* ?

A. By being a Free-holder of *Great-Britain*, I am a greater Man in my civil Capacity than the greatest Subject of an arbitrary Prince ; because I am governed by Laws, to which I give my Consent ; and my Life, Liberty, and Goods cannot be taken from me, but according to those Laws. I am a Free-man.

Q. Who gave thee this Liberty ?

A. No Man gave it me. *Liberty* is the natural Right of every human Creature. He is born to the Exercise of it, as soon as he has attained to that of his Reason ; but that my *Liberty* is preserved to me, when lost to a great Part of Mankind, is owing under God to the Wisdom and Valour of my Ancestors, Free-holders of this Realm.

Q. Wherein does this Liberty, which thou enjoyest, consist ?

A. In Laws made by the Consent of the People, and the due Execution of those Laws. I am free, not from the Law, but by the Law.

Q. Wilt thou stand fast in this Liberty, whereunto thou art born and entitled by the Laws of thy Country ?

A. Yes verily, by God's Grace, I will ; and I thank his good Providence that I am born a Member of a Community governed by Laws, and not by arbitrary Power.

Q. What dost thou think incumbent upon thee, to secure this Blessing to thy self and Posterity ?

A. As I am a Free-holder, I think it incumbent on me to believe aright, concerning the fundamental Articles of the Government, to which I am subject ; to write, speak, and

and act on all Occasions conformably to this orthodox Faith ; to oppose, with all the Powers of my Body and Mind, such as are Enemies of our good Constitution, together with all their secret and open Abettors, and to be obedient to the King, the supreme Magistrate of the Society.

Q. Rehearse unto me the Articles of thy political Creed?

A. I believe that the supreme, or legislative Power of this Realm, resides in the *King, Lords, and Commons* ; that his Majesty King *George the second* is Sovereign, or Supreme Executor of the Law ; to whom, upon that Account, all Loyalty is due ; that *each of the three Members of the Legislature* are endowed with their particular Rights, and Offices ; that the *King*, by his royal Prerogative, has the Power of determining and appointing the Time and Place of the Meeting of Parliaments ; that the Consent of *King, Lords, and Commons* is necessary to the Being of a Law, and all the *three* make but *one Lawgiver* ; that as to the Freedom of Consent in making of Laws, those *three Powers* are independent ; and that each and all the *three* are bound to observe the Laws that are made.

Q. Why is the legislative Power supreme ?

A. Because what gives Law to all, must be supreme.

Q. What meanest thou by Loyalty to the King ?

A. I have heard that *Loy* signifies Law ; and Loyalty Obedience, according to Law ; therefore he, who pays this Obedience, is a loyal Subject ; and he, who executes the King's Commands, when contrary to Law, is disloyal and a Traytor.

Q. Is it not in the Law, that the King can do no Wrong ?

A. It is ; for since *Kings* do not act immediately by themselves, but mediately by their *Officers*, and *inferior Magistrates* ; the Wisdom of the Law provides sufficiently against any undue Exercise of their Power, by charging all illegal Acts, and all Kinds of Male-Administration upon their *Ministers* ; by the great Regard, which is paid to the *King* by this Maxim, laying him under an indisputable Obligation, not to screen his *Ministers* from publick Justice, or publick Enquiry.

Q.

ten Mountains. This I have learn'd from Travellers, who have visited Countries in both Conditions; therefore, as I said before, I should reckon myself guilty of the greatest Crime human Nature is capable of, if I were any Ways accessary to the enslaving my Country. Though I have but *one Vote*, many Units make a Number; and if *every Elector* should Reason after the same Manner, that he has but *one*, what must become of the whole? A *Law* of great Consequence, and the Election of the *Member*, who voteth for *that Law*, may be both carry'd by *one Vote*. Great and important Services for the Liberties of their Country have been done by *ordinary Men*. I have read that the Institution of the *tribunes of Rome*, or the whole Power of the *Commons*, was owing to a Word spoke in Season by a *common Man*.

Q. *Is it not lawful then to take a Bribe from a Person otherwise worthy to serve his Country?*

A. No more than for a *Judge* to take a Bribe for a *righteous Sentence*; nor is it any more lawful to *corrupt*, than to *commit Evil that good may come of it*. *Corruption* converts a good Action into Wickedness. *Bribery* of all Sorts is contrary to the Law of God; it is a heinous Sin, often punish'd with the severest Judgments; it involves in it the Sin of Perjury, as the Law stands now; and is besides the greatest Folly and Madness.

Q. *How is it contrary to the Law of God?*

A. The Law of God saith expressly, *Thou shalt not wrest Judgment; Th u sh. lt not take a Gift*. If it be a Sin in a *Judge*, it is much more in a *Lawgiver*, or an *Elector*; because the Mischiefs occasion'd by the *first* reach only to the Individuals; that of the last may effect whole Nations, and even the Generations to come. The *Psalmist*, describing the Wicked, saith, *his Right Hand is full of Bribes*. The *Prophet*, describing the Righteous, tells us, *he shaketh his Hands from holding a Bribe*. *Samuel*, justifying his Innocence, appeals to the People, *of whose Hands have I taken a Bribe?* Then as to divine Vengeance, holy *Job* tells us, *that God shall destroy*

destroy the Tabernacle of Bribery. Achan's Avarice, who had appropriated to his own Use the Golden Wedge and the Babylonish Garment, brought the Judgment of God upon the whole People, so that they fled before their Enemies, till the Criminal was discover'd and stoned to Death. The Leprosy adhered to Gehazi (the Servant of Elisha) and his House for ever, for taking a Bribe from Naaman, a rich Minister of a great Prince. Therefore he, that taketh a Bribe, may justly expect what is threaten'd in holy Writ ; He shall not prosper in his Way, neither shall his Substance continue ; his Silver and Gold shall not be able to deliver him in the Day of the Wrath of the Lord

Q. Why is he, that taketh a Bribe, guilty of the Sin of Perjury ?

A. Because he sweareth,

I A. B. * *do swear (or being one of the People called Quakers, I A. B. do solemnly affirm) that I have not received, or had by myself, or any other Person, directly or indirectly, any Sum or Sums of Money, Office, or Employment, Gift or Reward, or any Promise or Privilege for any Money, Office, Employment or Gift, in order to give my Vote at this Election ; and that I have not before been polled at this Election.*

Q. What thinkest thou of those, who are bribed by Gluttony and Drunkenness.

A. That they are viler than Esau, who sold his Birth-right for a Mess of Porridge.

Q. Why is taking a Bribe Folly, or Madness ?

A. Because I must refund Ten-fold in Taxes of what I take in Elections ; and the Member, who bought me, has a fair Pretence to sell me ; nor can I, in such a Case, have any just Cause of Complaint.

Q. What wilt thou say then to the Candidate, that offers thee a Bribe ?

A. I will say, ' Thy Money perish with thee ! As ' thou art now purchasing thy Seat in Parliament, I ' have

** This Oath is enjoined by the late glorious Act for preventing Bribery and Corruption at Elections.*

‘ have just Reason to suspect thou’st *resolved* to sell thy
 ‘ Vote. What thou offerest, and what thou promis-
 ‘ est may be the Price of the *Liberties of my Country*.
 ‘ I will not only reject thy Bribe with Disdain, but
 ‘ will Vote against thee.’

Q. *Is not the Justice of a King sufficient Security for the Liberty of a People ?*

A. The People ought to have more Security for all that is valuable in the World, than the Will of a mortal and fallible Man. A King of Britain may make as many Peers, and such as he pleaseth ; therefore the last and best security for the *Liberties of the People*, is a House of Commons genuine and independent.

Q. *What meanest thou by a genuine House of Commons ?*

A. One, that is the lawful Issue of the People, and no Bastard.

Q. *How is a Bastard House of Commons produced ?*

A. When the People by Terror, Corruption, or other indirect Means, chuse such as they otherwise would not chuse ; when such as are fairly chosen, are not returned ; when such as are returned, are turned out by partial Votes in controverted Elections, and others not fairly chosen set in their Places.

Q. *How may a House of Commons become dependent ?*

A. When the Freedom of voting is destroyed by Threatnings, Promises, Punishments, and Rewards ; by the open Force of the Government, or the Insults of the Populace ; but above all by private Influence ; for they, who are armed with the Power of the Crown, have many Ways of gratifying such as are subservient to their Designs, and many Ways of oppressing such as oppose them, both within the Bounds of the Law.

Q. *Can a King have a more faithful Council than a House of Commons, which speaketh the Sense of the People ?*

A. None, for they will not only give him impartial Council, but will powerfully and chearfully assist him to execute what they advise.

Q. *What are the Marks of a Person worthy to serve his Country in Parliament ?*

A.

A. The Marks of a good Ruler given in Scripture will serve for a Parliament-man; Such as Rule over you shall be Men of Truth, hating Covetousness; they shall not take a Gift; they shall not be afraid of the Face of a Man, Deut. xvi. Therefore I conclude, that the Marks of a good Parliament-man are Riches with Frugality; Integrity; Courage; being well affected to the Constitution; Knowledge of the State of the Country; being prudently frugal of the Money, careful of the Trade, and zealous for the Liberties of the People; having stuck to the Interest of his Country in perilous Times, and being assiduous in Attendance.

Q. Who is most likely to take a Bribe?

A. He, who offereth one.

Q. Who is likely to be frugal of the People's Money?

A. He, who puts none of it in his own Pocket.

Q. You seem by this to be averse to chusing such as accept Places and Gratuities from the Crown. What is your Reason for this Partiality?

A. I am far from thinking that a Man may not serve his King and his Country faithfully at the same Time. Nay, their Interest are inseperable. Mr. Such an one, my Lord's Steward, is a very honest Man; and yet if I had any Affairs to settle with my Lord, I would chuse my Neighbour for a Referee rather than my Lord's Steward.

Q. Why is Frugality of the People's Money so necessary at this Time?

A. Because they have run out much, and are still much in Debt. My Father and I have paid our Share of one hundred Millions, and I have heard there are near fifty more to pay. I grudge not this prodigious Expence, as far as it has been the necessary Price of Liberty; but as it would grieve me much to see this Blessing ravished from me, which has cost me so dear; so on the other Hand I think it expedient to save, now the Affair is over, and the Government settled.

Q. Who are those, who are so careful of the Trade of the Nation?

A.

A. Such as are willing to keep it from all vexatious Interruptions by *Inspections, entering into Houses, Seizures, Suits,* and the Oppression of *Tax-gatherers*, as much as possible; such as are willing to take off the *burthen-some Duties*, which encrease the Expence of the Workman, and consequently the Price of the Manufacture.

Q. But as you have a Freehold, would you not be willing to be excused from paying two shillings in the Pound, by laying Excises upon other Parts of our Consumption?

A. No doubt but every landed Man would be glad to be free from paying *two Shillings in the Pound*; but, at the same Time, I would not raise, by *another Tax*, two Shillings in the Pound, nor one Shilling in the Pound for a Perpetuity; for *Parliaments*, who have no more to give, may be disappointed of Redress of their Grievances. Besides, I would not be deluded by an Impossibility; for if my Tenant has any *new Tax* laid upon him, I am afraid he will not pay me so much Rent; so that the *new Tax* must still affect *Land*. Then it is utterly impossible to raise by *Excises* what shall be equivalent to *two Shillings in the Pound*, without the Ruin of Trade; for the *Excises*, which are settled already, generally speaking, raise double the Duty on the *People*, of what they bring in to the Government.

Q. How can'st thou prove that?

A. By Experience of *several Excises*, as of *Leather, Candles, Soap, &c.* Whatever is brought into the Publick by *those Excises* is raised double upon the *People*; therefore if a *Million of Money*, or what is equivalent to *two Shillings in the Pound*, were levied by *Excise*, it would be *two Millions* on the excised Commodities, which must destroy every Subject of Trade in *Britain*.

Q. Why do'st thou insist that a Knowledge of the State of the Country is a necessary Qualification for a *Parliament Man*?

A. Because this is a Qualification, of late, very much unheeded. I have heard there are many Corporations, which never saw their Members.

Q. Is then a Writ of Parliament only as a Conge d'Elire for a Bishop, where the King nominates?

A.

A. God forbid! The *Crown* is never to meddle in an *Election*.

Q. Why is assiduous Attendance so necessary?

A. Because a *Parliament-man* is intrusted with the *Lives, Liberties and Properties* of the *People*, which have often been endangered by the *Non-Attendance* of many *Members*; because, if *Representatives* do not attend, I may have a *Law* imposed upon me, to which I had no *Opportunity* of giving my *Assent*.

Q. Thou wast prudently and justly resolved to promote, to the utmost of thy Power, the publick Tranquility. What are the Advantages thou propos'st from that?

A. All the Advantages resulting from political Society depend upon the publick Tranquility. Besides, by publick Tranquility, *Armies*, which are a Mark of Distrust of the Affections of the *People*, may be disbanded.

Q. Why do'st thou not love Armies in times of Peace?

A. Because *Armies* have overturned the *Liberties* of most *Countries*; and all who are well-affected to *Liberty*, ever hated them; because they are subject to an implicit Obedience to their *Officers*, and to a *Law* of their own; because they are so many lusty Men taken from *Work*, and maintained at an extravagant Expence upon the *Labour* of the rest; because they are many Ways burthensome to the *People* in their *Quarters*, even under the best Discipline, especially in *dear Countries*; because there are so many *Preferments* in the Hands of designing *Ministers*; and lastly, because the *King* will never be denied an *Army* as great as he pleaseth, when it is necessary.

F I N I S

f
1
o
t
y
f
f
r
m
n
s
i
e
of
m
it
w
m
2
P
m
w
E
12